

VZCZCXR05019
OO RUEHDBU
DE RUEHTH #0216/01 0321404
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 011404Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8001
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 000216

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2017
TAGS: [NATO](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP ON GREEK AFGHANISTAN CONTRIBUTIONS

REF: A. SECSTATE 4834
 B. SECSTATE 7434
 C. ATHENS 97
 D. ATHENS 111
 E. ATHENS 148

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHARLES RIES. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Greek FM Bakoyannis' intervention at the January 26 informal NATO Ministerial on Afghanistan included announcement of welcome new GoG monetary contributions to counter-narcotics and the Hungarian-led PRT in northern Afghanistan, as well as M-60 tanks for the ANA. Bakoyannis made no mention, however, of personnel for the Hungarian PRT nor of altering caveats that keep Greek engineers and medics in Kabul. GoG sources subsequently told us that, in addition to its financial contribution, Greece would provide only one or two agricultural experts to the PRT. While welcoming the GOG contribution, Embassy will continue to push the GoG to lift caveats and contribute personnel in addition to money and equipment. We will also work with the Hungarian Embassy to ensure that the GOG contribution to their PRT targets key needs. END SUMMARY.

THE FIGURES

¶2. (SBU) At the January 26 Ministerial, FM Bakoyannis announced the following new Greek contributions for Afghanistan:

-- Six-month extension of the Greek MASH unit (50 physicians, medics, and support personnel) in Kabul;
-- 300K-euro donation to the special UN fund for counter-narcotics;
-- 500K euros divided between four reconstruction and support programs led by the Hungarians, including health, education, agriculture, and water; and
-- Company (10 to 13) M-60 tanks for the Afghan National Army.

¶3. (C) In Greece, MFA spokesman Koumoutsakos announced the contributions in response to a journalist's question; the information was later posted on the MFA website. It received little attention in domestic media.

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME, BUT...

¶4. (C) The announcement more or less tracked with the previews we had gotten from various GoG sources prior to the Ministerial. We had been told in no uncertain terms not to expect the lifting of caveats or troop plus-ups, but we had understood (including from the Hungarian Ambassador) that the Greek financial contribution to the Hungarian PRT would be accompanied by commitment of personnel. MFA D2 NATO Directorate deputy chief Daskarolis commented to us following the Ministerial that there would be no Greek contribution of

personnel at present, but one or two agricultural experts might be possible "in a couple of months." General Staff Defense Policy Director Brigadier General Tsigaras told DATT the search for the agronomists was already underway.

¶5. (C) Hungarian Embassy DCM Andras Deak confirmed Greece's announcement of the 500K for the reconstruction projects and the possibility of one or two Greek experts in the future. He noted, however, some confusion on the Greek side regarding where their money would be sent. The Hungarians preferred the Greeks provide the donation to the PRT, which would divide the money amongst its various health, education, agricultural, and water projects. Deak said he had information indicating that the Greek Embassy in Islamabad preferred this route as well. The MFA in Athens, however, had recently told the Hungarians it wished to contribute the money directly to the Afghans -- a prospect Deak had difficulty understanding given that the Greeks would have no one on the ground to oversee how the money was used.

¶6. (C) The tank donation is also an area of question. The Greeks have a large number of well-maintained, if out-dated, M-60 tanks, which they intend to replace in the coming years.

The announced donation of a company (10-13) of M-60s for Afghanistan comes from this stock, but given the large numbers the Greeks have, they could probably do more. Their very generous donation of 100 former East German armored personnel carriers and over four million rounds of ammunition to the Iraqi army since 2005 suggests that the 10-13 M-60s for Afghanistan may be only the first step. (NOTE: Embassy would welcome input from USNATO and Department regarding Afghan needs and absorption capabilities for heavy armor. END NOTE.)

ATHENS 00000216 002 OF 002

COMMENT: NEXT STEPS

¶7. (C) We welcome the GOG's decision to bring additional contributions to the NATO table, particularly given the Greek public's skepticism. The details we have received post-Ministerial, however, confirm that the GOG remains reluctant to lift caveats or send new personnel (military or civilian). Nevertheless, sending even one or two agronomists in the near term cracks open the door. We will work with the Hungarians locally both to determine their further PRT needs and to encourage additional GOG commitment of personnel as needed. We also plan to encourage the Greeks to consider offering personnel for other civilian reconstruction projects. For example, given Greek experience in antiquities preservation, the Bamiyan Buddha restoration might be a project in which they could have particular expertise to share.

RIES